News release

4 January 2007

2007 - forecast to be the warmest year yet

2007 is likely to be the warmest year on record globally, beating the current record set in 1998, say climate-change experts at the Met Office.

Each January the Met Office, in conjunction with the University of East Anglia, issues a forecast of the global surface temperature for the coming year. The forecast takes into account known contributing factors, such as solar effects, El Niño, greenhouse gases concentrations and other multi-decadal influences. Over the previous seven years, the Met Office forecast of annual global temperature has proved remarkably accurate, with a mean forecast error size of just 0.06 °C.

Met Office global forecast for 2007

- Global temperature for 2007 is expected to be 0.54 °C above the long-term (1961-1990) average of 14.0 °C;
- There is a 60% probability that 2007 will be as warm or warmer than the current warmest year (1998 was +0.52 °C above the long-term 1961-1990 average).

The potential for a record 2007 arises partly from a moderate-strength El Niño already established in the Pacific, which is expected to persist through the first few months of 2007. The lag between El Niño and the full global surface temperature response means that the warming effect of El Niño is extended and therefore has a greater influence the global temperatures during the year.

Katie Hopkins from Met Office Consulting said: "This new information represents another warning that climate change is happening around the world. Our work in the climate change consultancy team applies Met Office research to help businesses mitigate against risk and adapt at a strategic level for success in the new environment."

Review of 2006 in the UK

This startling forecast follows hard on the heels of news that 2006 was the warmest year on record across the UK.

For 2006, all UK data have now been gathered, revealing a similar story to that of Central England Temperature already announced last month.

For the whole of the UK, 2006 was the warmest year on record with a mean temperature of 9.7 °C, 1.1 °C above the 1971-2000 long-term average. Ranked warmest years in the series going back to 1914 are:

- 2006 9.73 °C
- 2003 9.51 °C
- 2004 9.48 °C
- 2002 9.48 °C
- 2005 9.46 °C

Mean temperature, sunshine and rainfall for regions of the UK compared with the long-term average

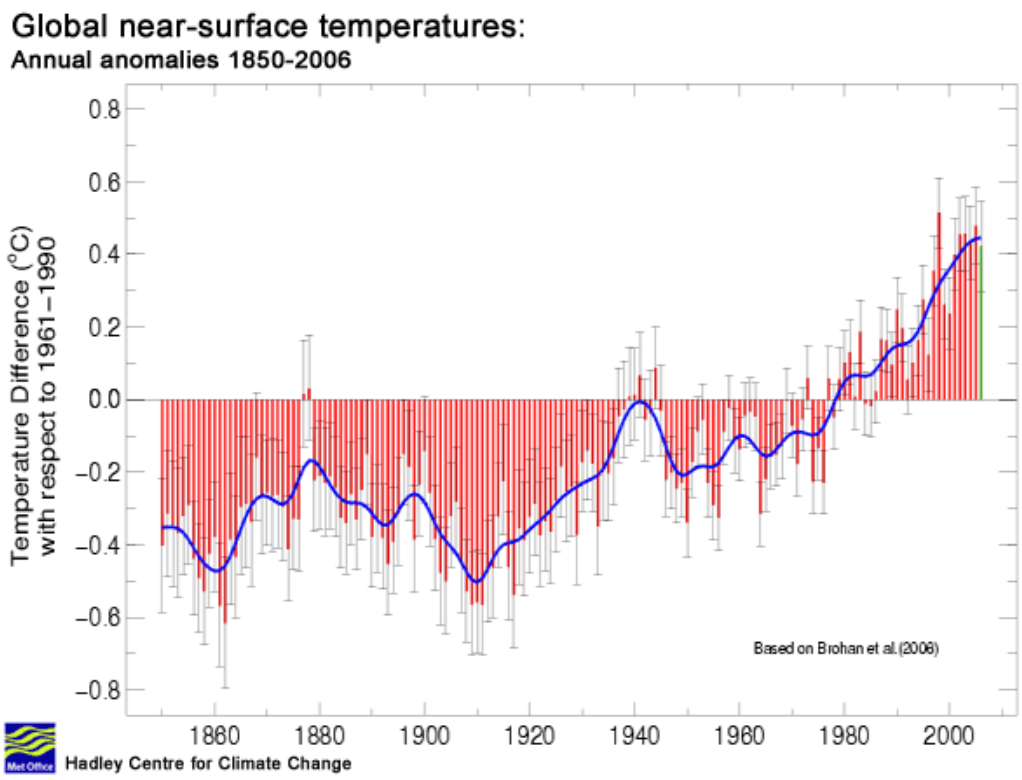
UK regional averages for 2006, anomalies with respect to 1971-2000

Region	Mean temp		Sunshine		Rainfall	
	Actual [°C]	Anom [°C]	Actual [hours]	Anom [%]	Actual [mm]	Anom [%]
UK	9.7	+1.1	1,507	113	1,176	104
England	10.6	+1.2	1,638	112	8,51	102
Wales	9.9	+1.0	1,534	113	1,420	99
Scotland	8.3	+1.1	1,300	112	1,652	109
N Ireland	9.6	+1.0	1,409	115	1,156	104

Autumn 2006 (September to November) was also exceptionally mild over many parts of Europe at more than 3 °C above the climatological average from north of the Alps to southern Norway. In many countries it was the warmest autumn since official measurements began.

Notes:

- The Met Office is the UK's National Weather Service, providing world-renowned scientific excellence in weather and climate change.
- Met Office climate change consultancy provides data and risk-management services that are used by other government departments and agencies, the private sector and the public to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Met Office Hadley Centre is funded by Defra and the MoD.
- The 95% confidence range of the global forecast is that the temperature will lie between 0.38 °C to 0.70 °C above normal.



Key to graph:

- Red bars represent the global temperature value for each year.
- The blue line is the 10-year running average.
- The green bar is the 2006 value (still provisional at this stage).

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